3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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Kuakonda. When Telami Dhurwa returned from jail after killing a man in a drunken quarrel, he offered his clan-god Uru Maru, a pig, a cow and a hen, and had to undergo the usual ceremonies of purification.

Apart from these ceremonies, however, the fact that a man has served a sentence for murder has singularly little influence on his social position and domestic happiness. It is true that imprisonment, if it is for a very long term, sometimes acts as an automatic divorce, and women feel that they are at liberty to marry again. But generally wives wait for their husbands to be released, as I found Deve, the wife of Kawasi Borga, waiting for her husband at Doriras. Borga, ten years before, had gone to jail with a life-sentence for killing his uncle. His wife had all the time been well looked after by the villagers, and I found her house substantial and prosperous. Her two sons had been successfully married and were carrying on the business of their home with the help of their wives.

People, however, are sometimes afraid to marry a released murderer. Doga of Jabeli must be one of the luckiest young men alive, for after being sentenced to transportation for one murder he was released after three years; whereupon he is said to have killed his wife, was sentenced to death and again got off on appeal. He came to see me armed with a ferocious-looking axe, which had actually been put in evidence at one of his trials as the weapon with which he had committed murder. He was trying to get a new wife, but without success. 'They are all afraid of me', he said, 'for fear I might kill them as well'. But he thought he might possibly get a widow. Another youth who found it very difficult to get a new wife was Hemla Bakka, who killed his wife for committing adultery, and got three years' imprisonment for it. At Aranpur all the girls were frightened of the charming Gutte, who had been in jail for killing a man in a drunken quarrel after a cock-fight. They thought if they displeased him, he might murder them too.

At Khutepal, Oyami Masa, who was imprisoned for killing his junior wife, seems to have suffered no loss of prestige on account of it. He is a Waddai, and when I was there he

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went over to Tikanpal to offer sacrifice on behalf of that village.

At Muler I visited the widow of Ido Deva, an unpleasant quarrelsome fellow who had recently been hanged for murdering one of the most popular men in the village. In spite of this, his widow was well treated. She was not excommunicated and was allowed to share in the usual feasts. But she always remained inside her house, and generally refused to talk to people; the headman told me that there would probably be some difficulty in getting her two sons married, for people would say, 'After all, their father was a murderer'.

The relationship between the families of a murderer and his victim is always a delicate one, and Frazer has collected many examples from all over the world in illustration. The Uraon make sacrifices to the angry ghost of a murdered man, and sometimes even reckon him among the ancestral spirits of his murderer. Roy records that two Uraon, related to each other as cousins, had a quarrel over a piece of land; and one of them, in a sudden fit of anger, thrust his axe into the bowels of his companion. The man, thus struck, at once ran to his assailant's house and, pressing his wounded stomach with his hands, sat down at one corner of the hut and exclaimed, 'Here I establish myself', and then ran out again to the field in dispute and dropped down dead. To this day, the descendants of the murderer propitiate the murdered man's spirit. After the harvest, the first sheaf of paddy from the field where he fell dead is offered to his spirit at the same corner of the house where he sat down before his death. The descendants of the murdered man too are allowed access to the spot in order to make similar offerings.[1]

I have not found this custom in Bastar, though that does not mean that it does not exist. But I have found everywhere an anxiety that there should not be any enmity between the families. Compensation is often paid to the victim's widow or family, and the murderer's family may contribute to the expenses of the funeral. Both families should always have a feast together. In Gamawada the family of an imprisoned homicide, Barse Mata, gave every kind of help to the relatives of his victim: among other

[1] S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), pp. 69 f.